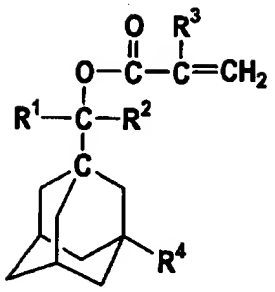
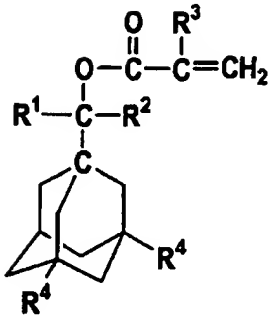


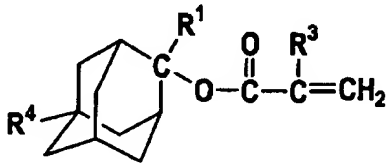
(1a-1)



(1a-2)

wherein R^1 represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl group or a cycloalkyl group; R^2 represents an alkyl group or a cycloalkyl group; R^3 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; R^4 represents an oxygen-containing group, and in formula (1a-2), the two R^4 substituents may be the same as or different from one another; and R^1 and R^2 may, jointly and together with adjacent carbon atom, form an alicyclic hydrocarbon ring,

or by the following formula (2a-1)



(2a-1)

wherein R^1 represents an alkyl group or a cycloalkyl group; R^3 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; and R^4 represents an oxygen-containing group,

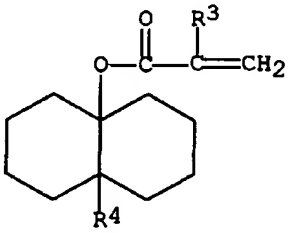
wherein the oxygen-containing group R^4 in formulae (1a-1), (1a-2), and (2a-1) is selected from the group consisting of hydroxyl groups, alkoxy groups,

aryloxycarbonyl groups, aralkyloxycarbonyl groups, hydroxymethyl groups, carbamoyl groups, N-substituted carbamoyl groups, and nitro groups.

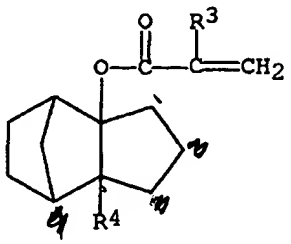
2. (twice amended) The acid-responsive compound according to Claim 1 having the formula (1a-1) or (1a-2), wherein R^1 is a hydrogen atom and R^2 is a straight-chain or branched-chain C_{1-4}alkyl group.

8. (twice amended) The acid-responsive compound according to Claim 1, wherein R^1 in formulae (1a-1) and ((1a-2) is a hydrogen atom or a straight-chain or branched-chain C_{1-4} alkyl group, and R^1 in formula (2a-1) is a straight-chain or branched-chain C_{1-4} alkyl group; and R^2 is a straight-chain or branched-chain C_{1-4} alkyl group.

9. (*unamended*) An acid-responsive compound represented by the following formula (2d) or (2e):



(2d)



(2e)

wherein R^3 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; R^4 represents an oxygen-containing group selected from the group consisting of oxo groups, hydroxyl groups, alkoxy groups, carboxyl groups, alkoxycarbonyl groups, cycloalkyloxycarbonyl groups, aryloxycarbonyl groups, aralkyloxycarbonyl groups, hydroxymethyl groups, carbamoyl groups, N-substituted carbamoyl groups, and nitro groups.

10. (twice amended) A photoresist resin composition comprising

(i) a polymer having at least one unit corresponding to the acid-responsive compound of formula (1a-1), (1a-2), or (2a-1) as defined in Claim 1 or of formula (2d) or (2e) as defined in Claim 9 and

(ii) a photoactive acid precursor.

12. (*unamended*) The photoresist resin composition according to Claim 10, which contains 0.1 to 30 parts by weight of the photoactive acid precursor (ii) relative to 100 parts by weight of the polymer (i).

13. (twice amended) The photoresist resin composition according to Claim 10, wherein the polymer is a copolymer.

14. (twice amended) A method of forming a pattern, which method comprises

subjecting a layer comprising the photoresist resin composition of Claim 10 formed on a substrate to pattern exposure and

developing the exposed coating layer to form a pattern.